

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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**Statement of U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
on Implementation of Vehicle Rollover Testing and Ratings by the National
Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
August 10, 2004**

Today the government agency responsible for automobile safety, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), announced the results of new improved tests for the relative tendency of vehicles to roll over on the highway.

The new test fulfills the requirements of an amendment to the law authored by Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA). The Markey amendment requires "dynamic" tests based on the performance of moving vehicles. Prior to the Markey amendment, NHTSA relied on mathematical models to make judgments about the likelihood of rollovers. Markey's amendment was made to the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD Act) enacted on November 1, 2000 in the aftermath of hearings before the Committee on Energy and Commerce investigating the safety of Firestone tires and related matters.

In response to today's announcement of NHTSA's rollover ratings, Rep. Markey said "I am pleased that the government's traffic safety agency has fulfilled the requirements of the Markey Amendment and released the ratings information for vehicle rollovers for the final group of 2004 model year cars and SUVs. The new rollover rating system is a vast improvement over the previous method of merely measuring a vehicle's height and width to ascertain rollover proclivity because the new system requires an actual driven track test.

"Consumers will now be able to know the real world driving performance of a car or SUV and compare its rating and percentage chance that the vehicle would rollover in certain conditions to other vehicles prior to buying a car.

"When one considers that rollover deaths in sport-utility vehicles last year rose 11 percent and accounted for 55 percent of fatal accidents in our country, it is clear that the enhanced safety information provided by the government's rollover tests will enhance the ability of consumers to make informed buying choices for their families."